**Adverse Effect 2**



**Disruption to Examinations and Assessments.**

A Joint Approach

The contingency Plan is designed to ensure a consistent and effective response in the event of major disruption to the examination system affecting significant numbers of Learners across several NISQ Approved Centres. All NISQ Approved Centres are required to have their own well established contingency plans in place to respond to such disruptions however, this Contingency plan is aimed at becoming a Joint Contingency Plan which takes into account these processes and procedures and is designed to complement them, not replace them. NISQ has a significant interest in assessments delivered in line with nationally and regulated standards, but where appropriate these contingencies should be applied to all NISQ Regulated Qualifications.

The plan will be implemented in the event of major disruption to the system, including the electronic software or hardware, widespread illness, travel disruption, bad weather or power failures. Any actions taken will be subject to the advice of the Chief Compliance Officer dealing with the specific circumstances being faced, for example the Police, Environment Agency or Internet Software provider.

Implementing the plan will safeguard the interests of Learners while maintaining the integrity of the examination system and safeguarding qualification standards. The contingencies applied will be selected based on the context of the disruption. They would be applied on a larger scale in response to any widespread disruption at a national level.

The priority when implementing contingencies will be to maintain three principles:

• Delivering assessments to published timetables

• Delivering results to published timetables

• Complying with regulatory requirements in relation to assessment, marking and standards.

If the usual contingencies are no longer sufficient to maintain these outcomes, an identified Crisis Management Team consisting of representatives of the Challenge , Review and Advisory Committee with the Chief Compliance Officer as Chair will be convened by NISQ to agree the additional actions required.

The NISQ Examination Timetable applies to all NISQ Regulated Qualifications and to the NISQ Approved Centres.

2. Communications:

The scale of the exams, qualifications and assessment by the NISQ Approved Centres in Northern Ireland is vitally important component to maintaining Public Confidence and minimising the Disruption to the Learner. NISQ has an experienced management team, who will ensure a robust and co-ordinated contingency plan is both in place to deal with any major disruption that may affect learners and also is flexible enough to remain dynamic to environmental changes and circumstances. In the event of major disruption, communication is a key factor in ensuring an effective and consistent response across the NISQ Approved Centres involved. This includes communications between the NISQ Approved Centres involved in the response and communications to stakeholders such, learners, parents or carers and the CCEA REGULATIONS. Details of whether specific contingencies will be flashed as an evolving message on the NISQ website and proactively communicated to relevant stakeholders.

NISQ require the NISQ Approved Centre involved in this Joint Contingency Plan are committed to:

• sharing timely and accurate information as required to meet the aims of the plan

• communicating with stakeholders so they are aware of disruption to the exams, assessments and finalised marking the contingency measures being implemented, and any actions required of them as a result

• ensuring that any messages to NISQ, NISQ Approved Centres, the Learners or the CCEA REGULATIONS are clear and accurate.

3. Background and Ownership:

NISQ Joint Contingency Plan is vital for the NISQ Approved Centres and vice versa, updated regularly through general feedback from the NISQ External Centre Verifiers, the NISQ Invigilators and the NISQ Approved Centres. It is jointly owned by NISQ and the NISQ Approved Centres the central point of contact for the Contingency Plan and convener of the Contingency Management is the Chief Compliance Officer or in absence the Director Qualifications Division NISQ. The Joint Contingency Plan is subject to regular reviews and amendments by the involved parties, so it continually represents the latest experiences and expertise to ensure appropriate responses to disruption to the exams, qualifications and assessment system.

4. Disruption of teaching time –

If a NISQ centre is closed for an extended period:

Criteria for implementation of the plan NISQ or the NISQ Approved Centre is closed or Learners are unable to attend for an extended period during normal teaching or study supported time, including Guided learning Hours and Total Qualification Time, interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning.

Recommended actions:

Where there is disruption to teaching time and Learners miss teaching and learning, it remains the NISQ Approved Centre responsibility to prepare Learners, as usual, for examinations and assessment.

• In the case of modular Regulated Qualifications, NISQ will advise Learners to sit examinations in an alternative NISQ Approved Location

• We will follow Government Guidance on emergency planning, with advice on severe weather. This is available on our website through the message system.

5. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers:

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Disruption to the distribution of examination papers to learners in advance of examinations. Recommended actions:

• NISQ will provide electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network. The Chief Compliance Officer will ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions.

• NISQ will source alternative NISQ invigilators for delivery of hardcopies.

6. Learners unable to take examinations because of a crisis - centre remains open:

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Learners are unable to attend a NISQ Approved Centre to take examinations as normal. Recommended actions:

• NISQ Chief Compliance Officer will identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue in agreement with the relevant NISQ Approved Centre and inform the CCEA REGULATIONS

• Learners will be offered an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series.

• The NISQ Approved Centres may apply for special consideration for Learners where they have met the minimum requirements. Learners are only eligible for special consideration if they have been fully prepared and have covered the whole module or unit required but are affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control. If a learner chooses not to sit an examination for other reasons they should be aware that special consideration rules will not apply.

7. NISQ Approved Centre is unable to open as normal during the examination period:

Criteria for implementation of the plan

The NISQ Approved Centre is unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations or assessments, including learning outcomes required, The NISQ Approved Centre must without delay inform NISQ with which examinations or assessments are due to be taken. As part of our general planning for emergencies, we will cover the impact on examinations. The responsibility for deciding whether it is safe for a centre to open lies with the Director of the NISQ Approved Centre. The Director is responsible for taking advice, or following instructions from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether we are able to open.

Recommended actions:

* NISQ Approved Centre will open for examinations and Assessments learners only, if possible.
* The NISQ Approved Centre will use alternative venues in agreement with NISQ (e.g. share facilities with other Approved NISQ Centre or use a NISQ Alternative Approved Location).
* The NISQ Approved may offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series.
* The NISQ Approved Centre will apply to NISQ for special consideration for Learners where they have met the minimum requirements.

8. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination papers:

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts. NISQ Invigilator takes Ill or has to leave due to an emergency, Recommended actions:

* In the first instance the NISQ Approved Centre will seek advice from NISQ Chief Compliance Officer regarding collection. The NISQ Approved Centres will not to make our own arrangements for transportation without approval from NISQ
* The NISQ Approved Centre will ensure secure storage of completed examination papers until collection, within a safe.

9. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked:

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Large scale damage to, or destruction of, completed examination scripts/assessment evidence before it can be marked.

Recommended actions

* NISQ will generate Learners marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of Learner achievement as defined by NISQ.

* Learners may be required to retake affected assessment at subsequent assessment window.
* Wilful neglect or none return of assignment, assessment or other evidence required by NISQ for the Finalised Marking, the NISQ Approved Centre will be advised by NOSQ the Learner has Failed the Qualification, the NISQ Approved Centre must prepare a report addressed to the Director Qualification Division NISQ outlining the circumstances for the failure to comply with requests for evidence from the Learner. Circumstances may exist that permit the Learner to reengage with the chosen Regulated Qualification at another date or for Special consideration to be applied for. The NISQ Approved Centre is responsible for notifying NISQ should these circumstances arise with a Learner so an agreed action plan that is effective for the learner be put in place.

10. Disruption to the scanning process –

where completed examination scripts are being scanned in preparation for on-screen marking or remote marking:

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Scanning process disrupted resulting in a risk to the delivery of results by scheduled dates. Recommended actions:

* NISQ will implement their existing contingency plans for disruption to onscreen marking process, this being the Examinations papers being stored securely in a safe until a NISQ Invigilator can collect and transport the papers to NISQ for Marking

11. Centre is unable to distribute results as normal:

Criteria for implementation of plan NISQ or the NISQ Approved Centre is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to Learners, or to facilitate post results services.

Recommended actions:

* The NISQ Approved Centre will contact NISQ about alternative options:

* NISQ will make arrangements to access its results at an alternative site.

* NISQ will make arrangements to co-ordinate access to post results services from an alternative site.

* Share facilities with other Approved NISQ Centres if this is possible, as appoint of disruption, that does not disadvantage the Learner from a logistical point of view.

12. Summary of Responsibilities in the event of Disruption of Examinations or Assessment

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| --- | --- | --- |
| NISQ, NISQ Director Qualification Division are Responsible for | Joint Responsible to the Learner | NISQ Approved Centre,  Qualification Coordinator |
|  | Plan Approved by NISQ | Preparing plans for any disruption to Assessments or exams as part of their general emergency planning. Ensuring |
| Ensuring centres receive examination materials for scheduled examinations and assessment material | Full Regulated Qualification Content, NISQ Learner Continuous Assessment Portfolio, written examinations | Preparing the Learner for Assessment and Examinations, for the Learner evidence, |
|  | Supplying a NISQ Invigilator, and Centre Assessor | Ensuring examinations and assessments are taken under the conditions prescribed by NISQ, NISQ Invigilator. |
|  |  | Ensuring, where relevant, that assessment materials and Learners Evidence work are stored under secure conditions. |
|  | Chief Compliance Officer Informed without delay | Deciding whether we can open for examinations and assessments as scheduled and informing NISQ if we are unable to open. |
| Advising NISQ Approved Centres on possible alternative examination or assessment arrangements and declining / approving proposals for alternative examination or assessment arrangements. | Chief Compliance Officer Informed without delay | Exploring the opportunities for alternative arrangements if we cannot open for assessment or examinations and agreeing such arrangements with NISQ. |
| Evaluating and declining / approving requests for special consideration or Reasonable Adjustment | NISQ Approval Panel Meets, to deliberate over the Special Consideration and reasonable Adjustment | NISQ Approved Centre -  Judging whether Learners meet the requirements for special consideration as a result of any disruption and or Reasonable Adjustment- dependent on the circumstances and submitting these requests to the NISQ |
| Marking, moderating and grading Learners through the Finalised Marking System | NISQ receives the Examinations as they take place from the NISQ Invigilator and the Full NISQ Learner Continuous Assessment Portfolio for Final Marking - Grade | Preparing and ensure the completion of the NISQ Continuous Assessment Portfolio, Qualification Coordinator, Internal Moderator, Assessors and Teachers |
| Issuing results to centres on scheduled dates. |  | The distribution of examination results to Learners. |